

Teaching French in Quebec 1970— How can we do a better job?

What should be the role of the French Department of an English-language university in Montreal in 1970? *Issues & Events* recently discussed this question with Serge Losique, Gilbert Taggart and Paul d'Hollander.

It comes through clearly that the pressures and requirements of our Anglophone and Francophone-conscious time have created a new situation, one in which traditional approaches may well prove inadequate. And so limit our ability to carry out our community responsibilities as a Montreal university to the satisfaction of that community.

To begin with, the French-teaching activity of SGWU is growing rapidly. Registration in French department courses expands at about 30 per cent a year. Quebec, where most of our students are going to spend their working lives, will be predominantly and increasingly a French-speaking province. We may hope that this means a bilingual province, but there can be no doubt that a good knowledge of French is becoming a *sine qua non* for full economic and social participation. And our clientèle, represented by the views of students and parents, already recognizes this.

This gives rise to two distinct responsibilities. On the one hand, there is a broad-based requirement for teaching French. In its brief to the Gendron Commission the University stated that the teaching of fundamentals should be regarded as a responsibility of pre-university education. However, there remains for the present at least the task of developing this basic knowledge into a working ability to use French. The Department finds that entering students, while they may have quite extensive knowledge of the language, often lack the method and organization they need to attain a real command of it. There is a rising interest in French in the secondary schools, but there are still serious weaknesses in method and application.

Secondly, there is the responsibility for developing the French specialists for whom there is a rising demand in the educational systems not only of Quebec but also of the other provinces. This can be achieved up to a point



French Department chairman Serge Losique

in the present undergraduate courses. But the Department believes it could do a much better job if it could offer postgraduate courses and a postgraduate degree, and initiate the kind of research that accompanies the higher teaching level.

Much of the demand for the first type of courses comes from first year students. In this academic year, the University, having underestimated the total demand for French, found itself in the unhappy position of being unable to provide courses for all the students who applied at registration. Some pretty scathing letters were received from students and parents as a result. Every effort is being made to ensure that this failure does not recur. The French Department, itself, proposed that it set up a service department, not unlike the one existing in the English Department to deal with freshman teaching. It would give special attention to courses in French-Canadian subjects, and might in due course also develop a program of non-credit courses open widely to the University community. But Serge Losique emphasizes that this task must not be carried out at the expense of the academic development of the department.

So far as the second aspect is concerned, the department would like to see a master's program in French established. Last fall 40 senior stu-

dents of the department signed a petition for such a program.

Clearly, a master's program would enable SGWU to turn out more well-qualified French specialists, and thereby better fill its educational role in an area where there is no doubt about the market for trained graduates. Since the course would be open to both day and evening students it would provide an extremely valuable opportunity to those who now teach French to improve their own ability and value. As with graduate studies in general, it would also make it much easier for SGWU to recruit top-level faculty. Indeed, in the present educational world it is extremely hard for a faculty or department to maintain its academic standing on the basis of a liberal arts undergraduate-only concept. Both full-time and visiting faculty seek the advantages of a graduate program in terms of both teaching and research.

In addition, there are certain special arguments to be advanced for institution of a graduate program at Sir George. McGill offers both an M.A. and a Ph.D. in French, but places at McGill are limited, and of the 30 or so students who apply from SGWU we are lucky if ten get accepted. However, Serge Losique reports that those who are generally render a good account of themselves. It might seem natural that our students move on for graduate studies to the French-language universities. However, so far Laval and the Université de Montréal have refused to recognize the Anglophone B.A. as equivalent of the Licence that they grant their own undergraduates, and this means an additional year or two of qualification for an advanced degree. While we may be moving to a better understanding of equivalency in this area, it would not be wise to bet on the removal of this long-standing hang-up. As a result, we even have a number of Montreal students applying to take their master's in French at Carleton, which does not seem an entirely logical situation.

The French Department at present consists of ten full-time faculty with about twenty part-time handling first-year courses. Among its special ac-

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Profs Gilbert Taggart and Paul d'Hollander

tivities is a summer school that attracts about a hundred students, notably teachers of French. Advanced courses are combined with a program of films, visits, discussions, etc. Prominent French educators come as visiting professors. This year, the summer school faculty will include Dr. Gérard Moignet, an expert on the history of the language, who was here last year. He has just been appointed to the Sorbonne. A newcomer will be Dr. Emilien Caracucca of the University of Toulouse, a Proust specialist.

The French Department pays particular attention to use of the language laboratory and the coordinated development of audio-visual techniques. Gilbert Taggart is now working on a project for a television section of French 201. This would consist of 52 programs, two a week, which students could take at the language lab, arranging the timing to suit their own schedules. In addition, it is planned to transmit the courses over one of the cable television networks.

The problem the French Department is now tackling is the proper definition and development of its role as a major teacher of French to our Anglophone society.

This must include an effective contribution to the overall needs of that society, helping to ensure that the English-speaking population can enjoy a satisfying and productive life in a predominantly French-speaking province. In many ways this reflects a pressing problem that the University, itself, faces. The definition of the role of the French Department depends to a large extent on the definition of the role of SGWU.

Board of Governors March 12 meeting

The constitution of the Graduate Student's Association was approved in principle at the last Board of Governors meeting.

The report of the Fund Procurement Co-ordinating Committee announced progress in a project to obtain the support of the motion picture industry for the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art.

Dr. Smola reported that a study has been made of the possibilities of renting office space in the neighbourhood. Whether and what we rent will depend on the money available in the coming year.

The Library has problems coping with circulation and returning books to the stacks due to a shortage of part-time student help.

A new telephone answering service has been instituted for the main University number. It operates from 10 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. as well as on Saturdays and Sundays.

Dr. Smola reported that the printing service has acquired a new auxiliary

installation. The service is breaking even financially.

The full-time MBA course fee was approved at \$650 for the coming academic year, the M. Eng. fee at \$700.

The Board approved a reduction of the ESA fee from \$6 to \$5 for the winter session, and the introduction of a \$1 fee for the summer session. This latter fee will not apply to day students taking evening courses in the summer.

The students services fees recommended by the University Council on Student Life were approved.

Mr. Hilton noted that the \$7 fee being levied on graduating students for the expenses of the graduating class executive had never been approved by the Board. After some discussion, the Board passed a motion to this effect, and asked the Principal to arrange for a notice of this fee to be included in the Announcement.

The Board passed a motion formally establishing the Department of Humanities of Science as part of the Faculty of Arts.

"Quebec Today and Tomorrow"

Education in Quebec will be under fire on CBC's "Quebec Today and Tomorrow" this Sunday March 22 at 12:30 p.m. on channel 6.

Featured are SGWU Academic Vice-Principal Jack Bordan and McGill's Michael Oliver. Their statements will be challenged by students from Sir George, McGill, Loyola and Dawson College.

ULC seeks agenda items

The University Library Committee is soliciting items for its agenda of a proposed open meeting to be held April 9.

Any library matters to be discussed should be sent to Mrs. Helen Howard, ULC secretary, in room N-703-1.

The agenda, time and place of the meeting will be announced by the end of March.

Drop Pre-Fine Arts

Students who wish to follow a pre-University (CEGEP-parallel) program at Sir George with the intention of preparing for admission to the Bachelor of Fine Arts program will now be required to enter Pre-Arts in lieu of Pre-Fine Arts. The Pre-Fine Arts classification has recently been discontinued and all potential BFA students will prepare within the Pre-Arts program for entrance to the three year undergraduate program in Fine Arts.

These students will apply for admission to the undergraduate program in Fine Arts during their second year of collegial studies. The students' performance in the prescribed art courses followed in the collegial program will be taken into consideration in determining their admissability.

Portfolios of art work from applicants to the pre-University program are not required.

Easter holidays

The University will be closed Good Friday, March 27. There will be no day or evening classes and the libraries will be closed.

The libraries will be open from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 28 but closed Sunday. No classes on Saturday.

Easter Monday, March 30, the University is technically closed. There will be no day classes, but evening classes will be held as usual and the libraries will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 10:45 p.m.

Wanted: 69 movie stars

Auditions are being held for a forthcoming feature film based on Dr. Serge Losique's novel "De Z à A." Shooting of French and English versions is expected to start in May.

Casting seems to cover everyone at the University. Required are 40 young blonde or brunette girls (10 for main roles), 8 young girls with long black hair, 5 tough and wicked-looking men, 8 men who are typical student types, 1 30-year-old man for role as photographer, 5 hippie-type men, 1 50-year-old man for the role of garbage collector, and 1 handsome 6-foot-tall blonde male.

Those interested should be in touch with the secretary of the French Department in room 519 of the Hall Building.

There is no pay but the possibility of glory. Auditions are scheduled for March 24 to 26 from 1 to 6 p.m.

THE WEEK AT SGWU

MONDAY 23

WEISSMAN and MAIN GALLERIES: Fine Arts students' annual exhibition, until March 30.

SMALL GALLERY: "How Prints are Made", last day.

CHANNEL 4: "Communications and Society" - a series of videotaped lectures by Prof. Charles Siepmann, NYU; this week "ETV and Lifelong Education" at 10, 10:30 a.m., 2 and 2:30 p.m. through Thursday; may be viewed in individual carrels in H-523.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY: Cinéma vérité with NFB films "Never a Backward Step" and "Stravinsky" at 3:45 and 8:30 p.m. in H-937; free.

MUSIC SECTION of FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT: Improvisation ensemble led by Steven Freygood working with film and audience participation at 8:30 p.m. in the theatre; free.

WEDNESDAY 25

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Meeting at 5:15 p.m. in H-762-2.

MUSIC SECTION of FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT: Open rehearsal and discussion of jazz with local professional group led by Al Hirsch at 1 p.m. in the theatre.

THURSDAY 26

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL: Meeting at 3:00 p.m. in H-769.

CONSERVATORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC ART: "La Belle Américaine" (Robert Dhéry, 1961) with Louis de Funès, Roger Pierre, Jean-Marc Thibault, Colette Brosset and Robert Dhéry at 8:30 p.m. in H-110; 50c for students and 75c for non-students.

FRIDAY 27

UNIVERSITY CLOSED

SATURDAY 28

NO CLASSES

SUNDAY 29

CHANNEL 9: Last "Can you all hear at the back?" with conclusion of Dr. Charles Siepmann's "Communications and Education" series and French language lab on Cable TV at 1 p.m.

potential BFA's

All undergraduate students who are intending to apply for a transfer to the Bachelor of Fine Arts program in the day division for the 1970-71 academic year should apply for this transfer at the Admissions office before April 1. This does not apply to collegial students.

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